1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

were generally associated with rocks and were not the spirits of the dead. There is however an exception, namely, Dehigole Yaka, whose history is as follows. A man from Dehigole, a Vedda, went to Kandy to see the king, probably Sri Vikram Rajah Sinha, the last of the Sinhalese kings, who was dethroned early in the last century. On his way back he was killed by an elephant, and now his spirit looks after the chena and prevents elephants breaking into and destroying the crops. A leafy branch is tied to a pole or dead tree in the chena, and Dehigole Yaka and other spirits are invoked, an offering of sweetmeats, jaggery, coconuts and rice cooked in coconut milk being made and subsequently eaten by the owners of the chena. There was said to be no invocation of the *yaku* of the recent dead, nor before taking honey which is obtained from trees.

LINDEGALA.

The "Veddas" described on p. 76 from Lindegala in the neighbourhood of Kallodi worship a large number of male and female spirits including the Bo Gaha Yaka and the Na Gaha Yaka[1].

As already indicated the people of Lindegala are Veddas in scarcely more than name. The most important of them, an old man with his son and son-in-law, visited us at Kallodi. The old man who is tall and presented typical Sinhalese features is a renowned *vederale* (medicine-man) and is employed by the Sinhalese for miles round. He brought with him to show us two ceremonial arrows with which he invoked the spirits. One of these arrows is of the shape of a Hindu trident, the other is of the usual Vedda shape and is notable on account of the silver *bo* leaf with which the blade is inlaid. This *aude* is shown in Plate XXV. Both of these had been presented by the Sinhalese king to one of his ancestors, apparently about 100 years ago.

[1] Although these *yaku* were spoken of in the singular there were many individuals of each species. Some of the other more important *yaku* which were worshipped were named, Wategala Wanniya, Gala Degala Wanniya, Gurugala Wanniya, Maldampahe Yaka, Lepat Yaka, Eheregala Yaka, Meheregal Yaka, Komal Yaka, Walmat Yaka, Hilihengala Yaka, Mikmal Naida Yaka, Kehelpotagala Yaka, Mawarngala Yaka, Hereng Yaka, Inihangala Wanniya, Muluhangala Wanniya, Gara Rajah Wanniya. These were only an insignificant fraction of the total number of *yaku* known to our oldest informant.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-8 (1907-1908) 1911
AK8 Vedda AK8

411 778 173 The story told us was that when this ancestor, who was a Vedda headman and a shaman of great fame, gave up his jungle life and began to cultivate, the Sinhalese king sent him the two *aude* as tokens that he granted the land on which he settled to him and his descendants for ever. It seems that previously to this they had led a more or less unsettled life, or had perhaps been dispossessed of their own territory during the troubles of the period. The arrows were in fact "selsin" and were considered the equivalent of a *sannasa*, the inscribed metal plate or rock face on which grants of land were formerly recorded. Inquiry showed that it was by no means uncommon for a man to be given a ceremonial example of an implement of his trade or profession as a *sannasa*. Thus, in the Kandy Museum there is a beautifully worked Bull's bell (*gonminigediya*) given as *sannasa* to Rantun Mudianse of Walala head of the Pattiya or Nilamakkara people by King Narendara Singhe of Kundasale who reigned 1706—1739. We may also refer to a ceremonial weaver's shuttle in the Colombo Museum and to the lacquered arrows described in Chapter XI.

776 775 The *Nae Yaku*, Kande Yaka, and Wanegata Yaka are considered less important than the tree *yaku* and the host of *yaku* alluded to above. Indigollae Yaka and Rahu Yaka are recognised but not considered very powerful, though it was said that all these were formerly invoked to give success in hunting. The *kolamaduwa* ceremony is known, very many spirits being invoked including Unapane Kiriamma. The *Nae Yaku* become attendants on some of the *yaku* mentioned in the above list and these are invoked first and bring the *Nae Yaku* with them, but it appeared that it was no longer the custom to hold a *Nae Yaku* ceremony within a few days of a death. Among the *Nae Yaku* mentioned was the spirit of the man on whom one of the last Sinhalese kings had bestowed the land of which the inlaid *aude* shown in Plate XXV is the *sannasa*. Another *yaka* greatly venerated is that of Kimbul Otbe, an important individual living a few generations ago concerning whom Nevill has written at some length[1].

[1] Nevill, who says that he could find no clue to his identity, still regarded Kimbul Otbe as "a great historical personage," for "The Sinhalese of the Eastern Province

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-8 (1907-1908) 1911
AX8 Vedda AX8

CHAPTER XII

COAST VEDDAS

THE Coast Veddas or Verdas occupy a number of settlements in the Tamil zone on the east coast. They exceed in number both the Village Veddas of Bintenne and their wilder neighbours of the borders of Uva and the Eastern Province; this is no doubt due to the fact that in the majority of Coast Veddas there is a large admixture of Tamil blood, and the comparatively thriving condition of their settlements must be attributed to the same cause. The date of their first arrival on the coast and of their subsequent intermarriage with the Tamils is quite uncertain; the latter state that there have always been Veddas in the neighbourhood of the sites they now occupy, but the Veddas themselves have a tradition that they come from inland. Knox does not mention them, but Nevill considers that they come from Sabaragamuwa (Sufferagam), being driven thence in the 17th century.

"The Vaeddas say that they never were related to these Coast Vaeddas, and do not know when they came to the Coast, or where they came from, nor did they ever hear that they belonged to any waruge of the race.

"The Coast Vaeddas do not know when they came or how they came, but they say that long ago their ancestors came from the Gala, far beyond the hills to the west. They also sometimes say they came from Kukulu-gammaeda and spread out along the Coast. Some say this is Kukulugam near the Verukal; others suppose it to be somewhere far away[1]."

[1] *Op. cit.* Vol. I. p. 183.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

We found that the Coast Veddas spoke of themselves as Verdas and said that long ago their fathers came from inland. They all speak Tamil, but some assert that they still know, and at times use among themselves, their old Vedda language, but when we asked the men who made this statement to speak in their ancestral dialect they spoke Sinhalese[1]. Besides this a few of the older men know the names of some of the Vedda *waruge*, while others are able to trace their descent to them.

The Coast Vedda is darker, taller and more stoutly built than the true Veddas. In fact they generally resemble low caste Tamils, yet in almost every settlement there are one or two men shorter than their comrades and presenting an almost typical Vedda caste of countenance. The women are all much bigger than true Vedda women and would pass for Tamils, after whose fashion they dress.

Plate LXVIII, figs. 1 and 2, represent Verdas from settlements to the north of Kalkudah.

The Verdas build comfortable huts in small clearings, usually within a mile of the sea; they cultivate maize and pumpkins and other easily grown crops round their houses and in patches of clearing in the surrounding jungle.

They have plenty of pots and baskets and also possess drums and fishing gear, so that their mode of life differs but little from that of the poor and low caste Tamils who are their neighbours. One, two, or more rarely, three houses stand in each clearing, and it seems that the people living in each clearing are closely related by blood or connected by marriage.

The chief Verda settlements north of Batticaloa are Pellanchenai near Kalkudah 20 miles from Batticaloa and at Varkanari some 10 miles north of Kalkudah on the far side of the river which is crossed by a ferry at Valarchchenai. At Panichchenkeni some 14 miles further north is another ferry, where the local Verdas act as ferrymen, while there are two other Verda settlements some three miles beyond the ferry at sites called Vellaiade and Kandaladi respectively.

[1] Nevill (loc. cit.) noticed the same state of affairs, he said "Only the old men speak what they call Vaedda, which is pure but quaint Sinhalese with a Vaedda accent, as a rule, though mixed with some words characteristic of true Vaedda."

2;Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

Tennent says truly, that they have "no system of caste among themselves; but, singular to say, this degraded race is still regarded by the Singhalese as of most honourable extraction, and is recognised by them as belonging to one of the highest castes;"* and he relates a legend, in which he says this belief originates; a legend, however, at which, he tells us, the Veddahs themselves smile, and of which they profess their ignorance. 648 [564]

As I shall afterwards show, I do not think this legend, which is confessedly not a Veddah tradition, has anything to do with the consideration with which, so far as their caste goes, the Singhalese regard them. Were there no better reason, the fact that the legend is by no means universal among the Singhalese residing in their vicinity, would probably be sufficient reason to reject it.

But Tennent has not been correctly informed with regard to their own belief regarding their own origin. For strange as it appears, they claim to be of royal descent. Beyond this vague assertion they profess to know nothing. They do not attempt to trace their descent from any particular king. They know nothing of their history. This is their *one* tradition; and though the neighbouring Singhalese, on whom they affect to look down, smile at their claim to such an illustrious origin, they do "regard them as of most honourable extraction," and in reply to any inquiry respecting it, only repeat the Veddah version of their royal lineage. It is said, too, that in the time of the native government the Veddahs always spoke of the king as "hoora," or "cousin."† 173

The Veddahs have no particular name by which they distinguish themselves, which would aid us in speculating on their origin. They simply call themselves "Weddah," and are so called, while they speak of the ordinary natives of the country as "Singhalese." The term "Habara," or "wild, barbarous," is applied to Veddahs, in books, and also "Vannacharakiya," which means "a hunter." 101

As Knox has told us, they speak the Singhalese language; but they do so with an accent and intonation so strange, that it sounds like some foreign tongue. It seems, as it were, "broken Singhalese," such as a man would speak to whom the language was an acquired one, so much does their pronunciation differ from that of their Kandyan neighbours. Although the identity between the Veddah dialect and Singhalese is evident, when they are compared with each other, it would require a very quick and accurate ear, indeed, to detect the similarity between them when both are spoken. 191 197

* Tennent, vol. ii, part ix, c. iii.

† It is reported, too, that some Veddahs do not claim royal descent, but that only a portion of them do. The Bicetean and Nilgala Veddahs certainly, say they, are "Raja-wansiya," of royal lineage.

4: Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

524 According to my authority the Veddas indulged in no games, unless, indeed, the custom of tossing dry leaves in the air and speculating on their position when they fell back upon the ground could be called a game. This, I am told, was only an occasional recreation, and indulged in by boys alone.

423 614 628 The limits of the hunting ground were jealously guarded by the Veddas, and anything like poaching by the members of one clan in the area recognized as belonging to another was punishable by death. Should a hunter lose his way and fall into the hands of a neighbouring clan, he would be closely watched, remaining for the time being in a sort of captivity. If the man's conduct during that time was such as to disarm suspicion he was permitted to go, and might even be accompanied to the confines of the clan's hunting ground, but he would have to proceed at once without looking back, or his conduct might lead to the belief that he was a spy, with fatal consequences.

226 The method of fishing was to hem in a piece of water by closely fencing in both ends of the stream. People would then enter the enclosed piece of water, armed with slender sticks, thrashing the water therewith till a fish was actually struck, when it would be captured. I saw this actually done in one pool on the Kumbukkan.

973 My informant told me that the Veddas were at one time harassed by a race of pygmy people, called the Nittawo, who lived in the country known as Lenama, that extended from Bagura in the Panawa Pattu in the east to the confines of the Kattaragama hills on the west.

According to him, these people lived in small troops of from 10 to 40, inhabiting caves, hollow trees, and crevices of precipices. They were about 3 feet or a little more in height, exactly like normal human beings, only in miniature. Their legs were hairy like those of the Wanduroo; they walked erect, and had no tails.

Their arms were short and very powerful, with strong hands, and talon-like finger-nails with which they tore and disembowelled whatever they captured. These generally were small animals, such as hare, mouse-deer, monkeys, iguanas, and tortoises. Their method of attack was by surrounding

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

the prey, especially if it was sleeping. In this way the Veddas occasionally fell victims, and in consequence they revenged themselves by exterminating the Pygmies. According to my authority, the Nittawo existed at the time of his grandfather, who, he asserted, took an active part with the other members of his clan in burning out one of their encampments. 173

The Nittawo were an entirely naked race; the females were shorter than the males. Their language appears to have been understood by the Veddas, and was described to me as like the twittering of birds.

My informant knew nothing of their customs, or if they made use of fire. They were, however, unarmed, and appear to have been finally exterminated by the Veddas about three or four generations ago.

I may here mention that as I was sceptical as to the story about this race, I took particular care to make inquiries at the distant village of Waradeniyawa (the furthest inhabited spot on the south of the Buttala-Wedirata) if the oldest inhabitant of that place could give me any confirmation of it. This inquiry was made when Dissan Hamy was not present, and it would have been impossible for my questions to have been anticipated. To my surprise, a very old man of the village completely confirmed in detail Dissan Hamy's description.

I also made further inquiry at another village from a headman, and he repeated the same story, adding that the Nittawo were destroyed by the Veddas out of fear.

It is difficult to reject as false a story, told devoid of the usual fantastic embellishments that characterize the history of mythical creatures such as Yakko, when it is completely confirmed by parties ignorant of what the others have said. Even though tangible evidence is not forthcoming, and it would be difficult to find any, of a people so primitive as these creatures appear to have been, I see no valid reason for disbelieving the statements made to me.

It would appear that the early Vedda and the Nittawo to some extent lived side by side, and both were primitive. In time the Nittawo were destroyed by a race who were armed, and these in turn were disintegrated and absorbed by forces they were powerless to overcome. The clan system was 174

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

2. VEDDAS OF GUNNER'S QUOIN

THE ferry at Periathurai marked the end of our river journey. Some miles inland was the rock called Gunner's Quoin round which Veddas lived. 131

Under a bo-tree by the river was an image of Ganesha the pot bellied, elephant-headed Hindoo god with offerings of withered lotus flowers before him. In a temple hard by, were massive bells and drums that kept deafening accompaniment on many a ceremonial day when peacock-plumed men, in the self-imposed torture of skewered cheek and pronged back, bounded hither and thither in delirious dance; and here were the implements, prongs and tridents, these frenzied devotees had dedicated to their unhearing god.

At the Tamil village of Manampitiya we were regaled with an old man's tales of the Veddas. He told us of one Patabanda only recently dead, called *walige**-Patabanda owing to his habit of wearing his loin cloth long behind. It appeared this Vedda was a fine marksman. A *rata-mahatmaya*† once wishing to test his skill pointed to a small jak fruit on a tall tree and asked him to shoot. The arrow flew true and stuck in the fruit; whereupon the Vedda feigning anger said roughly, "Now give me my arrow; it was you who asked me to shoot". The timid chief proffered money which was disdainfully refused. The Vedda then taking another arrow hit the stem of the fruit so that it fell and enabled him to recover both arrow and fruit. Thus do men pass into fable. 114 173

We were told many another tale of Veddas and their ways, and of matters connected with the ancient ruins to be found on the rock; of an anchorite who had lived in a cave there unharmed by the bears; and of ancient Vedda kings captured by stratagem and fraud.

A walk of five miles the next morning brought us to the foot of Gunner's Quoin. I was now brimming with expectancy; for I was about to see for the first time the Veddas in their homes; that aboriginal people who had time and again attracted the scholars of Europe, and in whose veins flowed the oldest blood of the inhabitants of Ceylon. They were here when Wijeya came from India in 543 B.C. and founded the Sinhalese dynasty; long earlier, when that Buddha came who preached to his followers at Mahiyangana after having put to flight the Yakkhas (Veddas?); to an even still older beginning their ancestry went, to a time in the stone age when man vied for existence with prehistoric forms. 114

To-day hardly a Vedda true to the old traditions survives; not one that uses beaten bark for apparel, or depends for sustenance solely on the jungle. The inroads of civilisation and the effects of miscegenation with the neighbouring Sinhalese or Tamils are tending surely towards the extinction of the race. Yet, for all that, many of the old Vedda traits still survive in their degenerate descendants and these are still a link with an unfathomable past. 144 178

*Tail †Kandyan chief

5: Spittel II-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

115 On our return journey, passing the ruins of a remarkable aqueduct of stone—the Watawala Kandiya—beside the remains of a crumbling 173 bund, we arrived at Kurunduwina where we met a doddering ancient 439 who claimed to have been alive when the British took Ceylon a hundred years ago. It is not often one meets old folk in these unhealthy lands. Here, I thought, was one who could tell us something about Veddas of a type we could not hope to see; for within view of his hut were the Sittala Wanniya hills, the immemorial homes of the Veddas. But his decrepit mind needed much jogging.

"Are there Veddas here?" I shouted twice into his deaf old ears.

"Now none," he said.

"Did they live on the rocks yonder?" I asked. He nodded affirmatively.

"Did they come here to barter?" I persisted. His tired lack-lustre eyes flashed to a memory as he answered with surprising alacrity, "Yes they came. When they had no food they came to exchange honey and hides for food. The Vedda would sit there, place his bow there, his arrows there, and his axe there, and he would ask for betel. If any one stepped over his weapons by chance, he would leap up in anger, bite the piece of human liver he carried in his betel-bag, and ask, 'Who's this that dares to defy me?' The gleam faded from the old man's eye, his weary look returned and he uttered not another word, question as I might.

The shifting *chenas* scattered about these parts make it very difficult to say where a village begins or ends. We were resting on the banks of the Rambukkan, (a course parallel to which we had so far followed) somewhere on the confines of Payile and Idambowa, when to our surprise we saw a Buddhist priest accompanied by the inevitable *abithaya** and a tall, wild, naked fellow. A Vedda of Bingoda the latter was said to be. [609] We tried to engage him in talk, but he would have none of it; seated on his haunches he stared at us with a hang-dog apathy eloquent of hunger; this melted away in a broad grin as he left us, greedily chewing the handful of muscatels and biscuits we gave him.

The usual route from here to Potuliyadda lay through the village of Mullagama. As this involved a detour we decided on a more direct if less used track; a decision we afterwards regretted as it lost us the interesting Veddas of Bingoda, and incidentally a clue to the discrepancy between Seligmann's statement and local report regarding the Veddas of the "Nuwaragala hills"—a missed opportunity the full significance of which we were only to realise some five years later after miles of [621] arduous and unnecessary travel. For the present we were told that the Veddas of Bingoda consisted of only three families, and that, though they forsook their huts for caves during the honey season, they were, if anything, less of the real Vedda than those of Henebedde.

Our journey was now an uncertainty; for the guides were doubtful both of the route and the likelihood of water. The jungle, hitherto dense, gave place to an occasional glade. Late in the evening we found ourselves in a spacious *talawa*, rank with tall grass that quite obliterated our path. Here we were benighted, just as we found a pool adequate to our needs. It was an interesting place, a veritable sanctuary, hill-encircled; an ideal

*A neophyte, attendant on a priest.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

13 causeway over an abysmal ravine. We had not the stomach to tempt those ways.

Below us stretched a vast forest studded with the tree-clad hills of Omuna, Henanagalla and many another; and over the red-topped *bongs* we caught the glimpse of the Mahaweli as it cleft the wilderness of trees.

173 To this retreat once came an ascetic who lived alone, lost in meditation, for months. His evening chant could be heard at Horiwila three miles away. The bears that came to drink at the pools in the caves did him no harm. In a hidden vault, so the story goes, he found a gold-lettered slab and a phial of oil. He made the wisdom of the script his own, and drank the oil; then descended the rock, and ever after went about as one obsessed.

115 Sinna's droll talk relieved the irksomeness of our descent. Indicating
[301] a wild jasmine, he told us they were the flowers Vedda women strung on creeper-stems for the adornment of their hair. He was for leaving us at the foot of the hill and continuing his search for food for his waiting family. But we took him to camp, fed him abundantly on rice and venison and gave him a heavy hamper besides. It was pleasant to picture the rare joy of his home-coming.

000 At Manampitiya old Kanapan-*vidane* met us with two limes which he graciously presented to us. This charming Tamil custom is often the prelude to a villainous request. Kanapan gave us cordial welcome, eyed solicitously our unkempt figures, and chided us in a kindly, paternal way for undertaking so 'terrible' a journey. "Why wander in the wilderness when you can play about the highways in your car?" he said. His conversation, though varied kept reverting to one theme—the delinquencies of the village school-master, now away on a holiday. Kanapan had a penchant for denunciation; on a previous occasion it was the tyranny of an apothecary, now it concerned the amours of a pedagogue.

"Is that the sort of man to teach young children?" he concluded disgustedly. "A man who breaks up quiet homes. The woman does not even care for him; he bewitched her with charmed food. A respectable home wrecked by a worthless fellow!" and he spat with scorn.

Perhaps it was the full bottle of whisky standing tantalisingly on the table that induced him to confide in us that the village tavern had now been closed for over two years, during which time he had not touched a drink; he had almost forgotten the taste of liquor he said wistfully.

"Then you are a total abstainer now?" I ventured.

"What's to be done, sir, I have to be," he sighed.

"I suppose you wouldn't have a drink now if one were given you?" I asked.

"How can I refuse when a gentleman offers," said he, taking the wind out of my sails. "With your favour, sir, I will. Cha," he continued with sudden affection, "I feared you had been to the war and got killed. How glad I am to see you again, sir."

We poured him a bumper which he swallowed neat, placing the empty cup within easy reach beside him. He reverted to the school-master;

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

flesh which they tore out and ate. They were afraid only of the buffalo and the dog. The Veddas, not very long ago, are said to have herded the last of them into a cave and destroyed them. Brute or man, persistent rumour in jungle countries brings the *Nittaewo* within the realm of the probable.

Entering the forest at Siyambala Anduwa, and working north, we strove to maintain a route as far removed as possible from civilisation represented by the coast road on the one hand, and the Badulla-Batticaloa road on the other.

Two miles within the jungle was the old path, now over-grown and abandoned, from Badulla to Pottuvil. It led hereabouts through a narrow pass guarded, it is said, a few generations ago by the Karande Hela Vedda who, having fenced it across, levied toll on travellers. Intercepting, as he did, a trade route from the interior to the coast, we may be certain he made a good thing of it, getting his share both of the *kurrukkan*, maize, vegetables and fruit of the *Vanni*, as well as of the paddy, salt and dry fish of the Coast.

Kandanketiya, nine miles from Siyambala Anduwa, boasts an ancient temple of the era of Dutugemunu. We found it in the keeping of a doddering priest of eighty, who showed us round, all the while muttering "hu-hu, hu-hu," his only form of comment. His bed-room, dark, airless and dirty, was better adapted to mice and spiders than human beings. A great brass spittoon, emptied he told us once in two weeks, was the proudest thing there. A stupendous bo-tree, planted by himself, mocked with its vigour the withered frame of him who had tended it. Throwing open the doors of his little temple, without much ado he bade us enter the holy of holies, and pointed proudly to pictures of *devas* and harpies, half spurred-fowl half woman, who he confidently asserted lived in the Himalayas. Incidentally he indicated a money-box on the altar. But no sooner were our donations secure than his interest in us rapidly declined, reaching its climax when we told him we were going: "All right, go," he said, settling down comfortably on his bed.

A hornbill flying repeatedly to a large tree attracted our attention. Perching itself wood-pecker-wise on the trunk, it fed the occupant of a hole there with berries which it brought out of its crop one by one. We were told this was the male feeding the female he had deprived of feathers and shut up in the hole. We suggested there might be young. "Not so," said a woman; "where then are the feathers and droppings at the root of the tree?" Here was an opportunity to test the truth of gossip we had heard regarding the domestic amenities of hornbills. A man was sent up to the nest. Squeezing his hand through the narrow opening he produced an egg; then seized something by the beak, and unsuccessfully tried to pull it through. With an axe he enlarged the hole and soon handed down to us a veritable travesty of a bird. Scared out of her wits, voiceless, featherless, with half-opened beak, she flapped pathetic wings and tumbled ludicrously about in attempts to escape. She was obviously unfit for existence in the outer world and we returned her to her dark abode. Rumour was right, the male hornbill took no risks.

Bowala village lies at the northern end of Westminster Abbey. Buried as we were in the forest depths, we had not seen the hill since leaving the heights of Haputale. Suddenly the leviathan bulked over the trees. "There, that is why it is called Govinda Hela*," said our guide pointing

*Goa inda hela—rock where the monitor lizard is.

776 173 172 136 361 [103]

5: Spinel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

582 The correct Vedda marriage is that between the children of a brother
835 and sister. A marriage between children of two brothers or of two sisters is regarded as incest. And here their standard is higher than ours.

587 Marriage for the Vedda is a very simple affair. Suthubanda, for instance, espoused a widow in his household. When she was freed by the death of her husband, it was right that he should take her, and he made no demur, though she was old and ugly and he young and robust.
583 Kaurala went to the younger of his two wives with a length of cloth, a bead necklace, a bangle and two hair pins, and brought her away. Gama, whose wife was an orphan of Henebedde, did much the same. But
591 the rule is that a man should cast in his lot with his wife's people. Then, the morning after marriage the pair go into the jungle and bring home, it may be a *kanava* comb, a monitor lizard, or some yams, and thus the common life begins.

585 The waist-string plays as important a part in Vedda matrimony as
291 does the ring in ours. When a woman has tied round the waist of a man a string of her own twisting, he becomes her husband. This string, some
[283 six encircling loops, lasting practically a life-time, is made of *niyande*
824] (bow-string hemp), the long bayonet-shaped leaf of which is shredded to fibre by being drawn repeatedly between the palm of the hand and a bare branch.

586 Divorce is as informal as marriage; the woman being merely returned to her parents or requested to go to whomsoever she chooses. But the Vedda is not, as a rule, unreasonably capricious in the exercise of his power; he has too great a sense of responsibility and of fair-play towards
762 the mother of his children and partner in his toil. A lad I knew blew out his chest with a gun, from remorse at having taken to himself two sisters who continually quarrelled with each other over his affections.

593 A Vedda will not hesitate to chastise his spouse when necessary; but that, after all, is only a mark of affection! We saw one belabour his wife unmercifully because she would not let him accompany us; she took all the beating she got, but had her own way in the end.

551 These people do not address their women-folk by name. Ask a man to
515 name his children, and he will stutter and stumble at the task. A Vedda hails his wife somewhat as follows: "What are you doing there? Come here and break my head." This apparently suicidal request is only his way of requesting her to perform the delightful uxorial duty of cleansing his hair of vermin.

614 The Veddas of Bingoda claim to be of the Morana *waruge*, the best
565 Vedda clan. Those of Danigala, of the Unapane clan, come next. But
515 for the Veddas of Henebedde the Bingoda folk profess disdain, calling them *Uro* (swine) and *Waliyo*, and saying it was their duty in old-time to pour water on the Morana's hands when they had fed. How much water these Moranas themselves use we have yet to learn; for, if the saying be true, that the worse the odour the better the Vedda, then the Veddas of Bingoda are aristocrats. What a thing is human nature after all, when even this wretched little remnant of humanity, without a rag to their bodies claim social precedence over each other!

614 There are nine Vedda clans or *waruges*; and each has its own story:

173 The Morana *waruge* was so called by a Sinhalese king who yearned for the *mora* fruit when it was out of season, and had his want proclaimed.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

A Vedda woman, who had preserved bunches of the fruit in a pot of honey, was able to provide them; and so earned the name of her tribe. The Unapana *waruge*, like all the other *waruges*, also owed its name to a woman. She, when a king was out hunting in a parched land, supplied him with drink by squeezing out her dew-drenched cloth! Thirst apparently destroys the fastidiousness even of kings. The Rugam *waruge* derives from an incident connected with the building of the bund of Rugam tank. After its completion, this earth-work used to break down with the yearly floods despite all efforts at consolidating it. The Sinhalese king of the time had a vision one night telling him, that if a pregnant woman were built alive into the bund, it would ever after remain intact. A Vedda woman was sacrificed, and her clan received the name of the tank. The Uru *waruge* was called after a child-birth in a pig's hole; the Tala *waruge* after such an episode in a *talawa* or glade; the Nabudena, Kiribo and Embille *waruges* after similar occurrences under *nabudu*, *kiribo* and *embille* trees respectively. The Veddas being nomadic these incidents are common. Gama, as we have seen, owed his name to being born on the way (*gamana*).

Though shy and retiring by nature, Veddas are always to be found in the vicinity of Sinhalese settlements; and that, for good reasons: Ceylon being but a small island, its remotest forests are easily accessible; more so in recent years when roads and railways have spread out their tentacles everywhere claiming from Nature her wildest solitudes. Any jungles that have not yet fallen a prey to planting enterprise owe it largely to their aridity and unhealthiness. Nowhere is there a spot in Ceylon to-day that is not within ten miles of some habitation. Besides, it is to the mutual advantage of both Vedda and Sinhalese to be near each other, for if the one can supply grain in days of dearth, the other can repay tenfold with flesh and honey in season.

The Sinhalese affect an indulgent tolerance towards the Veddas, and aver them to be more of a nuisance than a help, saying the Veddas have to be kept alive when starving. The Vedda, on the other hand, will tell you that he is never in want; for the jungle, even in its worst months, is never totally devoid of food for him who knows where to find it: *kanava* and *kotha* combs are always there, and meat and yams of one sort or another. It must however be admitted, that the Veddas have a great partiality for what the unaided jungle cannot give—*kurrukkan*, maize, and tobacco. Rice is a welcome occasional meal to the Vedda, but he cannot do without *kurrukkan*; it takes much rice to fill the stomach, whereas a *kurrukkan* cake is like a stone, and even a small piece satisfies.

A Sinhalese told us that if you gave a Vedda much by way of barter, he would never come near you again, but would go where the giving was more niggardly. (What a salve to the conscience!) We asked a Vedda if this was true: "Much they give us," he said; "though they are always ready enough to take all we give them—and more."

In the bottom of their hearts the Veddas have a suspicion that the Sinhalese wish them no good. A Vedda, when asked how it was that their numbers had dwindled so, said, with simple faith, that it was due to the Sinhalese having killed out his people, by giving them charmed tobacco to eat, so that they died of disease or misadventure. The recent influenza epidemic fairly wiped out the last of the Veddas.

8: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX8 Vedda AX8

181 sophisticated Vedda knows what is expected of him he will act up to
152 the expectation right enough. Personally I have never yet met a Vedda who could not laugh. The truth is that the Vedda will laugh with the best of us when there is occasion; but he is a stranger to the conventional, hypocritical smile of civilisation, meant only to please and so uncertain an index of the heart. The Vedda's face, like a child's, is a mirror to his mind.

His natural expression is one of apathy and moroseness. Schooled to hardship and privation, he is neither greatly distraught by sorrow nor transported by joy He expresses his emotions with more moderation than we; he is the greater fatalist; and accepts with stoic equanimity the hard conditions of his life which have wrought into his expression a dour indifference, a decorous gravity.

There is something naturally fierce in his nature; and it does not do to anger him. The tradition is undoubtedly true that the Veddas, at one time, carried in their betel bags fragments of human liver which they chewed when roused, to give fire to their frenzy. And this is probably the origin of the Sinhalese threat, "I'll eat your liver!" There is a spot in the Eastern Province which commemorates to this
● [173] day an early incident of colonisation: A Vedda had once way-laid and killed a European soldier, and going up to him could hear the ticking of his watch; examining this he said, "His life is still here," and dashed it to pieces on a rock.

When a Vedda returns from an expedition no one must speak to him until he has rested and it has pleased him to talk first. One who had accompanied us once on a hunt nearly killed a Sinhalese boy who innocently asked him what he had brought, the moment he arrived. Most sportsmen, Vedda or not, are impatient of cross-examination when fatigued—especially if unsuccessful.

177 The Veddas have no conception of a supreme being; nor have they any myth or theory bearing on cosmogony. The panorama of the heavens is beyond their questioning; but its supremacy is instinctively avowed: "*Mā Suriya Deyyo*" (by the Sun God) is an oath by which
195 the Vedda vouches his good faith.

176 Like animals, concerned only with their immediate needs, they take the world very much as they find it. But if the aloof heavens leave their imaginations untouched, not so their immediate environment. Here exist real powers more within the pale of their comprehension, influencing every act of their lives, overshadowing their credulous minds, and affording at least some data on which to found a faith. Is it surprising then that they people Nature with sentient beings, unseen, but very evident by their acts. And what spirits more comprehensible to the primitive mind, more inspiratory of faith and fear, than those of one's

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Another strange thing about the Veddas, and one which may possibly be connected with their lack of humour, is the fact that every one of them is a George Washington, unable to tell a lie or to conceive of anyone else telling a lie.

They cannot even believe that any one would take the property of anyone else, and association with civilisation has failed to convince them that it is possible.

With all this—or, rather without all this—the Veddas are a peaceable, gentle, quiet people. They take wives without any marriage ceremony, and are faithful and constant to them, supporting them to death.

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